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THE SITUATION IN AFGHANISTAN AND ITS IMPLICATIONS FOR INTERNATIONAL PEACE AND SECURITY
STATUS OF THE PROTOCOLS ADDITIONAL TO THE GENEVA CONVENTIONS OF 1949 AND RELATING TO THE PROTECTION OF VICTIMS OF ARMED CONFLICTS

SECURITY COUNCIL
Fifty-third year

Letter dated 28 September 1998 from the Permanent Representative of Austria to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

I have the honour to bring to your attention the statement on the situation in Afghanistan issued on 23 September 1998 by the Presidency of the European Union (see annex).

I should be grateful if you would have this letter and its annex circulated as a document of the General Assembly and of the Security Council.

(Signed) Ernst SUCHARIPA
Permanent Representative of Austria
to the United Nations

* Reissued for technical reasons.

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Annex

[Original: English and French]

Statement on the situation in Afghanistan issued on 23 September 1998 by the Presidency of the European Union

The European Union is deeply concerned by international reports of massacres of innocent civilians, mass executions of prisoners of war in northern Afghanistan, and of air and rocket attacks on residential areas. Of particular concern are reports of killings of Hazaras in Mazar-e-Sharif.

The European Union recalls its Council's common position on Afghanistan and the European Union's condemnation of the killing of Iranian diplomats during the recent fighting in Mazar-e-Sharif.

The European Union calls upon the Taliban to provide security guarantees to permit an international investigation of these crimes, which should be carried out as soon as possible.

The European Union asks all the parties involved to fully respect international humanitarian law and human rights in all parts of Afghanistan, and would welcome an international presence, particularly in Bamyan province, to observe compliance with these rights. The non-compliance with the basic principles of international law is a major factor in an alarming situation of tension in the region, in particular, between the Islamic Republic of Iran and the Taliban.

The European Union will continue to give its full support to United Nations efforts to promote peace and stability in Afghanistan, as well as to further action deemed necessary by the Security Council. The European Union welcomes the intention of the United Nations to send an evaluation team to Bamyan province to assess the humanitarian needs of the civilian population.

The European Union welcomes the proposal of the Secretary-General of the United Nations to send his Special Envoy, Mr. Lakhdar Brahimi, back to the region for further negotiations.

The Central and Eastern European countries associated with the European Union, the associated country Cyprus, and the European Free Trade Association Countries, members of the European Economic Area, align themselves with this statement.